



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Richmond, CA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Richmond for a Brownfields Pilot. The project area is the 900-acre North Richmond Shoreline, which contains a variety of brownfields in a relatively compact area. Aging heavy industry, low-income housing, idle and vacant properties, and waste disposal facilities are concentrated in an area that borders a distressed neighborhood and an estuarine ecosystem known to support two endangered species. At least 36 properties (90 percent of the City's developable area) are contaminated with volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls, and metals. The sector has a mix of thriving large businesses and struggling smaller ones. The presence of hazardous materials on the latter's property, combined with their shaky financial condition, has stymied growth in that sector.

OBJECTIVES

The focus of Richmond's brownfields effort is to stimulate economic growth and improve public health and the environmental quality of the Bay. To do this, the project is building on the intensive planning and cooperative partnerships that have evolved over the last five years. Richmond has

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Richmond, California

Date of Award:
September 1996

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets 900 acres of the shoreline containing aging heavy industry and waste disposal facilities of Western Contra Costa County which is in the northwest corner of the City.

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<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

included a green component in their planning, that will provide public recreation, open the shoreline for public use, and establish zoning standards to limit industrial activities that may endanger human health and the environment. Richmond is working to increase public awareness of contaminated sites and involve the community in remedial planning and redevelopment activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Created a computerized inventory of all properties within the project area. Listing includes assessor parcel number, site names, jurisdiction, address, property owner, and other site related information. A site inventory has been distributed to interested parties;
- Identified tentatively the site selection criteria and potential sites that will use matching funds from the private property owners of the sites in the inventory; and
- Held meetings with the North Richmond Industrial and Agricultural Association, the Municipal Advisory Committee, neighborhood councils, the League of Women Voters, and West County Toxics.

The Pilot is:

- Completing preliminary site assessments of two to five sites within the North Richmond Shoreline;
- Developing financing mechanisms specifically to promote the City's brownfields process;
- Working to clarify jurisdictional authorities to promote coordination among the City, County, and State;
- Continuing to streamline the regulatory process through cooperative partnerships of the State and Federal authorities; and
- Implementing community education and outreach programs to promote full stakeholder participation.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Richmond Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following:

- Several property owners, representing a number of large properties in the Pilot Project Area, are working together to explore issues of mutual concern such as regulatory cleanup processes and site assessments.
- The Pilot is working with Contra Costa College's Center for Science Excellence to develop information on the environmental status of each property in the inventory.